Steel import curbs by US

163. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "US panel paves way for steel import curbs" which appeared in The Business Standard, dated the 24th October, 2001;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the remedial steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) to (c) Government is aware of the ongoing safeguard investigations being conducted by US authorities on imports of broad range of steel products. On bahelf of the Government of India a pre-hearing brief on remedy *inter alia* containing certain suggestions including recommendation of a country specific quota for India has been submitted to the concerned US authorities. While the US authorities have found injury to the domestic steel industry in respect of certain products, no reasons for the injury decision have been given. Government of India awaits the final report which is expected sometime in December this year.

Impact of terrorist strikes on exports to USA

164. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the terrorist strikes in USA and military retaliation have affected the Indian exports to USA largely;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Govenment have chalked out plans to boost exports to USA; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) and (b) Indian exports to USA have declined. There is a perception that the terrorist strikes in USA and military retaliation could depress US economy thereby causing decline in Indian exports to USA.

(c) and (d) The Government of India is working closely with Export Promotion Councils and other Apex Organizations to promote exports to the USA.

Trade treaties with neighbouring countries

165. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to review the trade treaties with neighbouring countries;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details of steps taken so far or proposed to be taken to improve trade relation with neighbouring countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) and (b) The Government of India in the Department of Commerce has proposals to review the Trade Treaties/Trade Agreements with Nepal and Bangladesh. The India-Nepal Treaty of Trade due for renewal of December 5, 2001, is under review so as to provide for safeguards to protect Indian industry. The India-Bangladesh Trade Agreement was also due for renewal from October 4, 2001. Bangladesh has proposed extension of its terms for 6 months from October 4, 2001.

(c) The Government of India has taken various steps to improve trade relations with all neighbouring countries, which include participation in trade fairs & exhibitions, exchange of trade delegations, holding of JBC meetings, exchange of commercial information apart from improvement in infrastructure and technology etc.

The bilateral trade between India and Myanmar is reviewed regularly through national and sectoral meetings being held under the aegis of Ministry of Home Affairs.

Import of agricultural products

†166. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the import of agricultural commodities is permissible under Open General Licence;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.